

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 HEW-06 INR-07 NSAE-00 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00

EB-07 IO-11 /068 W

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R 210905Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3517

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 1027

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, IN

SUBJECT: CHASNALA MINE DISASTER-CALCUTTA PRESS

REPORTING JANUARY 20

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO BOMBAY AND MADRAS FROM
CALCUTTA JAN 20TH RPTD FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE:

UNCLAS CALCUTTA 0188

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, IN

SUBJ: CHAS NALA MINE DISASTER-CALCUTTA PRESS REPORTING

JANUARY 20

1. ALL CALCUTTA PAPERS OF JANUARY 20 CARRY STORIES REPORTING RECOVERY OF BODIES IN BADLY DECOMPOSED STATE FROM CHAS NALA MINE AND APPARENT ABANDONMENT OF HOPE THAT ANY SURVIVED. STATESMAN, WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE LATEST STORY REPORTS: "TEN BODIES WERE RECOVERED TODAY FROM THE CHAS NALA MINE. IDENTIFICATION WAS POSSIBLE WITH THE HELP OF THE STEEL BADGES WHICH MINERS WORE WHEN THEY WENT DOWN THE MINE ON DECEMBER 27. TWO BODIES WERE CRE-
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MATED AFTER POST MORTEM. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO HOPE OF

ANY OF THE 375 TRAPPED MINERS SURVIVING THE DISASTER. I AM ON THE VERGE OF HOPELESSNESS," SAID MR. S.S. PRASAD, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF MINES SAFETY, WHO INSPECTED THE MINE TODAY ALONG WITH OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS."

2. CONDITION OF REMAINS INDICATED BY BUSINESS STANDARD ARTICLE: " THE AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT MOST OF THE BODIES OF THE TRAPPED MINERS HAD BEEN HIGHLY DECOMPOSED DUE TO THEIR LONG STAY UNDER WATER. THESE ALSO HAD BEEN EATEN BY COCKROACHES. THE BODIES SEEN INSIDE AND BROUGHT OUT HAD ONLY SKELETONS AND STARTED DISINTEGRATION SAY AGENCIES," ACCORDING TO AMRITA REPORTER, " THE FIRST BODY WHICH WAS BROUGHT OUT.. WAS SO HIGHLY DECOMPOSED THAT BESIDES THE SEKLETON AND SOME FLESH SOMEWHERE, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT. I SAW THE DEAD BODY WHICH RESEMBLED A HEAP OF FLESH. BARRING THE WAIST PORTION, ALMOST ALL THE BONES WERE VISIBLE."

3. ALL REPORTS DESCRIBE DIFFICULT CONDITIONS IN MINE, WHICH ARE HAMPERING RESCUE OPERATIONS. ACCORDING TO STATESMAN," BRICKS, RAILS, PIPES AND TIMBER WERE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE PLACE," AND WATER WAS WAIST-DEEP IN MINE. SUPPLEMENTARY ARTICLE IN PAPER SAYS THAT EXPERTS HAVE WARNED OF POSSIBILITY OF EXPLOSIONS, FIRE AND COLLAPSES. PAPERS REPORT THAT RESCUE OPERATIONS WILL CONTINUE TODAY (JANUARY 20) IF DEBRIS AND WATER REMOVED SUFFICIENTLY. KOREN

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